

Elk Hide Ropes

by Ron Ukrainetz

Since the encampments this summer, I have been asked several times for the 4 strand weave we used for making the elk hide/rawhide ropes. If you want a 50 foot rope, you'll need 4 strands about 80 or 90 feet each. Splicing can be done several ways, either by tying a knot, simply weaving a new section into the existing weave, or the "slice and splice" in the case of flat rawhide strips. I worked over the sequence of photos that I took into black and white illustrations and they are pretty self-explanatory. First, we started with the standard 4-strand weave.

We also used a 4-strand 'sinnet' weave, which basically is a three strand over one strand, which acts like a center pole. It looks like a macrame', which I think it now is, but I have seen it used for a super strong rawhide rope. After I showed the younger kids at the upper camp how to do the regular 4-strand, somehow they switched to a sinnet about half way through the weave; still don't know how they did that.

